

## Alicia's Pupils: *One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train* and "Children Meet Cinema"

Dohi Etsuko (Head of Cine Monde and Head of "Children Meet Cinema")

The camp named "Children Meet Cinema" is held annually in Kanazawa ever since its launch in 2004 and we have started its Tokyo-area edition this year. It is mainly consisted of visual toy crafting workshop, cinema appreciation workshop and film production workshop.

Looking back, my inspiration in launching the camp was Ignacio Aguero's seminal documentary *One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train* where a teacher named Ms. Alicia Vega had film education classes for children. Alicia showed *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* by Auguste and Louis Lumière to kids in the class who had never seen cinema before. She taught them the basic principles of cinema by showing them zoetrope. It was a wonderful classroom. I knew this was the way to do it if I ever held a film camp for kids. As soon as I rented a video, I took note of every single class that was shown in the film. Then again, the Japanese kids in 2004 and the Chilean kids living in ghettos in the era of the dictatorial regime of the Chile government had so few in common. And how would the modern

kids, who grew up playing video games, enjoy playing paper-made visual toys? As it turned out, they did. The moment they watched inanimate drawings started moving with the aid of zoetrope which they made by themselves, they squeal with joy with starry look in their eyes. Just as Alicia's pupils did in Aguero's film.

What made the film truly unique was Aguero's ability to notice subtle changes in Alicia's pupils and capture them on film. The kids gained confidence and nurtured self-esteem through the classes. The joy of cinema aroused their curiosity so that they wanted to know more on their own will and enjoyed learning process. The look on kids' faces when their parents let out a gasp of surprise upon watching their children growing so fast were exactly the same in Aguero's film and in my workshop.

In our film production workshop, participating children, who meet each other for the first time, spend three days together as they proactively write, film, edit and screen their own cinema. What matters here is *for the kids to encounter "the real thing" and for*

*the grown-ups to keep their mouths shut and not meddle with them.* All the filmmakers we invite are first class. We ask them to pass on their own unique view on cinema to the kids rather than to teach them text-book filmmaking. All we can do is to encourage kids to think for themselves: What do you want to shoot? What do you need to do in order to accomplish it?

One of the greatest things about cinema is that it has so much variety in terms of work assignments that it offers something for everyone. The participants need to work as a team to achieve their common goal, which is to complete their film, so that they start communicating proactively even if they do not know each other at first. To seriously commit themselves and work closely with their peers to create something they want to make and subsequently to show the completed film to audience. This can give them a huge boost of self-confidence. They make noticeable growth in the process.

Alicia's pupils are growing in numbers here in Japan. What could be more exciting for me in this year's YIDFF than to be able to watch Aguero's latest film, *The Other Day*?

(Translated by Usui Naoyuki)

### ■ Screenings

*The Other Day* [IC] ..... 10/11 15:30- [A6] | 10/13 12:30- [CL]

### ■ Screening and Talk

Studying Cinema, Making Cinema

— Lecture and Film Screening of Ignacio Aguero  
(*One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train*)

10/15 17:00-19:30 [F4] | Admission Free